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THE WORK

OF

PREACHING CHRIST.

A Charge:

DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF OHIO, AT ITS FORTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONVENTION, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, AKRON, ON THE 3D OF JUNE, 1863.

BY CHARLES PETTIT McILVAINE, D. D., D. C. L.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF OHIO.

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CHARGE

To the Clergy of the Diocese of Ohio:

Brethren,—It is a long time since I addressed you in the form of a Charge. Various have been the causes; the chief of them, as you well know, having been connected with the state of my health. Addressing you again in that mode, and with exclusive reference to matters peculiar to our office as Ministers of Christ, realizing how near my time is to lay it down, I choose a subject with which a Bishop may well desire to close his ministry; which indeed all our work should be identified with, and which, I am thankful to say, has been obtaining, ever since mine began, a deeper and stronger possession of my mind, my affections, and my ministry—I mean *the work of preaching Christ*, according to the Scriptures, and the example of the Apostles.

"Go preach the Gospel," were the words of our

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Lord to his Apostles, which conveyed to them and to us the whole weight and substance of the commission of his Ministers and Ambassadors. It was the unquestioning obedience of a simple and unhesitating faith to that one command, animated by an unquenchable love to its divine Author and to the souls he died to save, enlightened by the teaching and made mighty by the power of the Holy Ghost, that constituted all the vigour and efficacy of the ministry of the Apostles. It was thus that their weapons of warfare became "mighty through God," and achieved those stupendous victories of the truth over "the spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience," which the weaker faith and more timid obedience of the Church in later days have so poorly imitated. And, as in the beginning, so also in all times of the Christian dispensation, it has pleased God that sinners shall be brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ" and made partakers of his salvation, by the obedience of his ministers to that one original charge and command—"*preach the Gospel.*" Faith by hearing; Gospel faith, by hearing Gospel truth; and such hearing, by the preaching of the word of God, is His standing rule accord-

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ing to which He bestows His Spirit for the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of men.

But it is manifest from the Scriptures that the Apostles identified the Gospel *with Christ;* so that, in their view and practice, to preach the Gospel was neither more nor less than to preach Christ. The record which, in a few words, describes their ministry is that, "daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." St. Paul to the Romans defines the whole Gospel by saying that it is "concerning Jesus Christ."* The employment of his two years' imprisonment at Rome was all comprehended in "teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus." And his whole ministry was given unto him, he testifies, that he "might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." As he could say, "For me to live is Christ;" so for him to preach was Christ. To him Christ and the Gospel were one.

But we must here note the chief feature in their preaching of Christ. They omitted nothing pertaining to him; but there was one thing on which, more than anything else, they very particularly and em-

* Rom. i. 3.

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phatically dwelled. They took great pains to set forth the Lord Jesus in all that he was and is, in person and office, as once on earth and now in heaven, his preëxistent glory with the Father, his incarnation and humiliation in our nature, his death, resurrection, and intercession; all his love, all his promises, all his commandments; so that there was no part of the whole counsel of God "concerning His Son Jesus Christ," which they kept back. But manifestly there was one event in his history, one work amidst all his works, which stood in their view as the great event and work, around which they gathered the force of their testimony, as its central light and power—to which they made all that went before it look forward for consummation, and all that succeeded look back as to its foundation, and on the faithful declaration of which, with its immediate connections, they very especially rested the faithfulness of their work as preachers of the Gospel. No doubt you anticipate me. Such passages of the Apostles arise to your minds, as, "we preach Christ *crucified*;" "I determined not to know anything among you (while declaring unto you the testimony of God) save Jesus Christ and *him crucified*;"

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"God forbid that I should glory save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "For the preaching of the *cross* is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." They preached Christ—but as Christ *crucified*. They said continually, like John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," but it was the "Lamb *slain*"—Christ *in his death*—bearing "our sins in his own body on the tree," that they pointed to. They rejoiced in everything pertaining to their Lord, from his birth at Bethlehem to his present glory at the Father's right hand; but the one thing in which they rejoiced so supremely, that everything else was lost in comparison, was his cross. Of the two sacraments ordained of Christ for his Church, that which alone goes with the believer to be renewed and repeated all along the way of his earthly life, has for its great object to "show the Lord's *death* until he come." It was a great lesson which the Lord thus taught us as to how we must preach him. His Apostles therefore became in speech, what that sacrament is in symbol; constantly showing the Lord's death as the sinner's life. Thus, when they spoke of the Chris-

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tian's race for "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"—and when they exhorted us while in that contest to be always "looking unto Jesus"—the special aspect in which they presented him, was as *enduring the cross.* And I need not here say that their sense of the supreme importance in their ministry of the death of Christ was because they beheld therein the one only and the one all-sufficient sacrifice and propitiation, the *vicarious* atonement, for the sins of the whole world; that great work of God wherein he laid in Zion, for a sure foundation, the precious cornerstone, on which the sinner believing shall not be confounded. It is all contained in one verse—"Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust to bring us to God."* And again, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."†

Thus, brethren, we have our lesson and example. In the way the Apostles preached the Gospel we must try to preach it. As they preached Christ, so must we. God forbid that we should glory in anything else as ministers of the word. Preachers of Christ, according to the mind of Christ—ah, how all hon-

* 1 Pet. iii. 18. † Gal. iii. 13.

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ors, all satisfaction in our work will perish but that! When our stewardship is to be accounted for, and we are just departing, and the veil, half drawn aside, discloses what we are to meet and what to be forever, how then shall we care for praise of learning or praise of speech or any vapors of men's applause! But then, to have "the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity,—not with enticing words of man's wisdom," we have made it our life-business and our heart-pleasure to "teach and preach Jesus Christ," as they did whom he gave to be our examples, having ourselves first learned his preciousness to our own souls; oh, what consolation and thankfulness with which to die.

Evidently then, my brethren, it is a most serious question to be always studying, how we may so proclaim the truth committed to us in Holy Scripture, that in the sense of the Apostles it may be said of us in our whole ministry that "we preach Christ crucified." To this we devote this address. It is a great question indeed. Many are the failures—many the egregious failures. Sometimes it seems as if the preacher could preach just as he does if Christ and his work were a mere incident in reli-

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gion, a name, and little more—answering now and then as a convenience to a sentence; introduced occasionally, because, under some texts, not easily avoided, but never as the root and foundation out of which our whole ministry proceeds. But what awful condemnation to be thus essentially defective at the very heart of the great work committed to us! Nothing can in the least atone for its absence. You might as well attempt to turn night into day, by lighting a candle as a substitute for the sun. Our ministry is all darkness, emptiness, and impotence; all condemnation to us, all delusion to those who hear us, all dishonor to the grace of God, whatever the breath of man may say of it, except as it is pervaded, illumined, filled with the testimony of Christ as once the sacrifice for sin, crucified and slain; now the glorified and ever-living intercessor for all that come unto God by him.

There are many ways of approaching more or less to that attainment without ever reaching it. Some of the most common we will endeavor to state:

It is very possible to preach a great deal of important religious truth, and so that there shall be no admixture of important error in doctrine or precept—

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yea, truth having an important relation to Christ and his office, and yet not to preach Christ. The defect will be not in the presence of what should not be there, but in the absence of what should be, of that which is necessary to give all the truth delivered, the character of "*truth as in Jesus.*" Such absence, when nevertheless all is true, may be more destructive to the Gospel character of the preaching, than even the introduction of some positive error. The preaching may be very earnest. It may contain much that is affecting and deeply impressive — strong emotions may be stirred in the hearers. The earnest enquiry may be excited—what must we do? And yet, the preaching may wholly fail in giving any such distinct answer to that question, as will turn the attention of the enquirer to Christ as all his refuge. We may say a great deal about and around the Gospel and never preach the Gospel. Religious truths are not the Gospel, except in proportion as, like John the Baptist, they point to the Lamb of God. For example—suppose you preach on the vanity of the world; the uncertainty of life; the awfulness of death unprepared for; the tremendous events of the judgment-day; the little profit of gaining the whole

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world and losing the soul; suppose you enlarge on the necessity and blessedness of a religious life, and the happiness of the saved. Does it follow that you have preached the Gospel, or any part of it? If deep impressions are made, and serious enquiries excited, does it follow that Christ is preached? Such topics unquestionably belong most legitimately to our ministry; they are important parts of the truth given us to enforce; but they are entirely subordinate and preliminary. They are not the distinctive *seed* of the word from which God has ordained that newness of life shall spring. They are rather the plough and the harrow to open and stir the ground, that it may receive the seed of life. You may spend all your time in such work—not omitting to sprinkle your discourses with the oft-repeated name of Christ and with much Gospel language; and just because there is no pervading exhibition of Christ, in his work of Justification by his righteousness and of Sanctification by his Spirit, given so pointedly and plainly that whosoever will may understand, you may never attain to the honor, in the sight of God, of teaching and preaching Jesus Christ, whatever the estimate of those who have not

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learned to discriminate between truth that is *religious*, and truth that is not only religious, but distinctively *gospel*-truth; who know not the difference between such preaching as makes the hearer feel some spiritual want, and that which tells him what he wants and where and how he is to find it. The hearer who has learned Christ, as his lesson of heart and life, of hope and peace, and knows nothing as precious to his soul, but as it leads him to Jesus, on the cross of sacrifice and on the throne of intercession, Jesus in his invitations and promises, Jesus in his grace to help, his righteousness to clothe, and his power to sanctify, will feel that in all that ministry "*one thing is needful*"—and that one thing, the very thing on which all its character hinges,—CHRIST.

But let us advance a little further. You may preach with faithfulness and plainness the strictness and holiness of the law, how it enters with its requirements into all the thoughts and affections of the heart, pronouncing condemnation on the sinner, and bringing us all in guilty before God. There may be no shrinking from the fullest exposition of the Scriptures concerning the end of the impenitent.

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Still more: the office of Christ as the only Saviour, and his merits as the only plea, may be introduced not unfrequently, and yet may there be a great lack of such distinct setting forth of Christ — such holding up of Christ crucified, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness before the dying Israelites for all to see and live—such presentation of God's great remedy for every man's necessities, as belongs to the consistency, simplicity and fullness of the work committed to the minister of the Gospel. While speaking much of duty, the grace to enable us to do it may not be proportionably presented. While the penalties of sin may be kept in full view, the fullness and tenderness and earnestness of the invitations and promises of Christ to the sinner turning unto God, may be very dimly exhibited. That great lesson, which we have need to be always studying, may have been but little learned, how to preach the law as showing our need of the righteousness of Christ, and how to preach the Gospel as establishing and honouring the law; the one to convince of sin and condemnation, the other as providing a deliverance so complete that to the believer there is no condemnation; the one as tak-

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ing away all pleas derived from ourselves, the other as furnishing a most perfect and prevailing plea in the mediation of Christ; the law as giving the rule of life, the Gospel as giving the power of life, yea, life from death, in Jesus Christ; the law to humble us under a consciousness of an utter beggary before God; the Gospel as directing us to him in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell.

Again. It may be that doctrine immediately concerning the Lord Jesus, and bringing his person and office into view, may be much introduced. We may take opportunity to speak of his infinite dignity of being; the mystery of his incarnation; the humiliation and love and grace of his coming in our nature; his tenderness and compassion, and power to save; the perfectness of his example and the depth of his sufferings. Indeed, everything revealed concerning him may at times be found in our teaching, without error, and in each particular, as it stands by itself, without serious defect. But there may be still an important deficiency. The *proportion of truth* may not be kept. There is a proportion of parts in the whole body of gospel truth just as there is the same in our own bodies. We must

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omit none of the parts, but put each in its right relation to all the rest. To fail in this, so that while we embrace all we deform all, by a disproportionate exaltation of some, and depression of others, may be just as destructive of the gospel character of our ministry, just as confusing and misleading, as if we omitted some truths, and perverted others. For example, you may preach Christ in various aspects; but Christ *crucified*, the great sacrifice of propitiation, though not omitted, may not have that high-place, that central place, that all-controlling place, that place of the head-stone of the corner, which is necessary to its right adjustment to all parts of the system of faith. You may preach the Incarnation of Christ in all its truth as a separate event, and yet in great error as regards its relation to other events, making it so unduly prominent that his death shall be made to appear comparatively subordinate and unessential — the means exalted above the end—the preparation of the body of Christ for sacrifice, being made of more importance and more effective in our salvation than his offering of that body on the cross. But the great Sacrament which we carry with us all the way of our journey,

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as our great confession, and joy and glory, is to show, as oft as we eat that bread and drink that cup, not the Lord's *birth*, but "the Lord's *death* until he come."

You may preach all of Christ's work as well as person, and all in due proportion of parts, and yet some other vital truth essentially connected may be so disproportionately presented as to create in the whole a most important defect. You have exhibited the foundation which God hath laid in Zion. The question remains, how the sinner is to avail himself of that foundation. He is to build thereon. But How? The Apostle answers, "*He that believeth* on him shall not be confounded." We build by faith. We cannot preach Christ without preaching on that by which we become partakers of Christ. Evidently confusion, indistinctness, feebleness, deficiency there, must produce the same effect throughout the whole Gospel. If faith, in its nature, office, efficacy and distinctive operation and fruits, be kept in a place so obscure, so subordinate, or taught so confusedly that either it is wholly out of sight or hid in a crowd of other things; placed in the outer court of the temple instead of immediately by the altar

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of sacrifice, as the one instrumental grace by which the sinner partakes of the "Lamb of God;" if the works which are its fruits be so confounded with itself that the grace by which we are "rooted and grounded" in Christ, is made of no more influence in our participation of him than the several works of righteousness which grow out of its life, and follow upon the participation of Christ through its agency, then is the relative adjustment of truth most seriously spoiled and deformed.

Lastly, under this head of our inquiry; it may be that occasionally in a discourse, now and then, the setting forth of Christ is satisfactory in point of doctrine and the proportion of truth. But it may be only occasionally thus, when the text so obliges, according to rhetorical propriety, that we cannot avoid it. But such texts may not be chosen very often. Passing from subject to subject, the preacher comes, from time to time, to one which necessarily leads to the manifestation of Christ, in some leading feature of his grace and salvation, and then all may be well done and calculated to enlighten a mind hungering for the truth. But, meanwhile, you may hear many a discourse which contains scarcely more of anything

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distinctive of the Gospel, or pertaining to Christ, except perhaps his name sometimes introduced, than if it were some other religion than Christ's of which the preacher is the minister. And in the general course of his work we may look in vain after that evident fondness of heart for views which most intimately and directly look *unto Jesus;* that habitual feeding of the flock in pastures watered by the river that proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb; that strong tendency, when subjects not directly testifying of Christ must be handled, to keep them as near to him as possible, and to return from them as soon as possible to others of a nearer neighborhood to the cross; that desire to illuminate all subjects with light from "the face of Jesus Christ," which proves the preacher's determination "to know nothing among men, but Jesus Christ and him crucified." We miss that *habitualness* of the testimony of Christ, that special love for all the region round about Gethsemane and Calvary, the atonement and the intercession, and the great gifts of the Spirit purchased thereby; we miss that constant tracing of all spiritual life and consolation, in its every influence and fruit, to Christ as the life, and that careful

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binding of all spiritual affections and duties upon him for support and strength, as the vine-dresser trains his vine upon its trellis, which appears so remarkably in the teaching of the Apostles.

We have thus endeavored to indicate some of the paths by which, without delivering anything untrue, and while delivering much important truth, we may come short of the duty under consideration. We proceed to consider how we may fulfill it. *What is it to preach Christ?*

We have a great example in our Lord's own teaching. When, after his resurrection, he met the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and found them in such darkness and doubt concerning himself, it is written that, "beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself:" *the things concerning Himself.* Our office as Christian ministers, expounding the Scriptures, is to bring forth all their teaching concerning that glorious One, *Himself.* St. Paul therefore said that he was "separated unto the Gospel of God *concerning His Son Jesus Christ.*"* To teach sinners to know Christ, and to "count all

* Rom. i. 1–3.

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things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him," looking to the power of the Holy Ghost to communicate, through the truth which we give only in the letter, that spiritual and saving knowledge which only God giveth, is the general expression of our duty.

But in the Gospel "concerning our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, in the circle of doctrines and duties and promises and blessings which constitute the message of great salvation in him, there is, as we have already hinted, a system of parts mutually related and dependent, all in perfect harmony, none so obscure or remote as to be of no importance to the right representation of the whole. That system, like that of our sun, has a centre, by which all the parts are held in place, from which all their light and life proceed, and around which all revolve. You cannot exhibit the system of truth and duty till you have made known that central light and power; nor can you make known that power in all its truth, without exhibiting those surrounding and dependent parts of doctrine and precept. That central sun of light and life is Christ. All of gospel truth and duty, of consolation and strength, abides

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in Christ—derives from Christ, and glorifies Christ —and must be so presented or it is divorced from its only life and loses its gospel character. He is the True Vine, and all parts of gospel truth are branches in him. Let such truth be presented without that connection, then its character as truth may remain, but its character for "*truth as in Jesus*" is lost. Its vitality is gone. Fruit of life in Christ Jesus, it cannot produce. It is just as true and important concerning truth as concerning men, that "the branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine."

Now what is the best mode of setting forth this system of grace? Where shall we begin? Shall we first take up the elements of religion (the outsides of the circle; reasoning upward from general truths to the more particular; explaining and enforcing ordinances and institutions of the Church) as our road of approach to the Head and Life of the Church; confining attention to means of grace before we have directed our hearers to the grace itself in the great fountain head; and thus gradually, and after a long process of preparatory work, arriving at last at the person and mission and sacrifice of

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Christ? But we must remember who they are whom we are thus keeping so long in the cold and in the dark. They are sinners under the condemnation of the law of God. They are dying sinners. How brief the time of some of them to learn, you know not. You have no time to spend on preliminaries before you have introduced them to the great salvation. What they have most need to know is, He who came to seek and to save the lost—how they may find him, and what are the terms of his salvation. Begin at once with Christ—"Behold the Lamb of God"—is the voice. There is no light till that light appears. The icy-bondage of the sinner's heart yields not till that sun is risen. Astronomers, when they teach the solar system, begin with the sun. Thence, to the related and independent orbits, is easy. So the apostles taught. See how, when they had the whole system of the Gospel, as distinguished from that of the law, to teach the Jews—the whole outward and visible of the Christian Church, as well as all the inward and spiritual of the Christian life, all so new and strange and unpalatable to a people so unprepared, so entangled with traditionary aversions and deep-seated perversions, see how they leaped over all pre-

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liminaries and began at once with Christ and him crucified, the sacrifice of his death, "and the power of his resurrection." At once they broke ground and set up the banner of their ministry there. Just at the point where the pride of the sinner would most revolt, and the wisdom of man was most at fault, and the ignorance of Jew and Gentile was most complete, where the Jew saw only a stumbling block and the Greek only foolishness, *there* they opened their message. "I delivered unto you, *first of all* (said St. Paul), that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."* They could not wait to root out prejudice, plant first principles, approach the entrenched power "that ruleth in the children of disobedience," by the strategy of man's wisdom, when they knew that Christ was the great "power of God unto salvation." At once to open the windows and let in the sun was their way of giving light to them that sat in darkness. At once to show the amazing love of God to sinners in not sparing His own Son, but delivering him up for us all, was their way to draw the sinner's heart to God. Human device

* 1 Cor. xv. 3.

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would have said, as it has often said, in substance, Make philosophy prepare the way. Clothe your teaching in robes of man's wisdom. Keep back the offence of the cross till you have first conciliated the respect of your hearers by a show of human learning and reasoning. And when your master must be preached directly, don't begin at his death. Speak of his life, its benevolence, its beauty. Compare his moral precepts with those of heathen sages. Christ as the example and the teacher, is your great theme. "No (said St. Paul), lest the cross should be of none effect," "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." They remembered the words of their Lord, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Lifted up in the cross he had now been. Lifted up as Christ crucified for us, in the sight of the whole world, by the ministry of the Gospel he was next to be. Such was God's argument with sinful men.

They believed and therefore preached. God gave the increase, and wonderful was the harvest.

Thus, dear brethren, we have our lesson. We must begin as well as end with Christ, and always abide in him, for the life and power of our ministry,

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just as for the peace and joy of our own souls. But having thus begun, what remains? It is the revealed office of the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier and the Comforter, to *glorify Christ.* "He shall glorify me," said the Lord. But how? "*He shall take of mine, and show it unto you.*" It is *our* office also, under the power of the Holy Ghost, to glorify Christ in all his person and relations to us, and by the same method, namely, to *take of what pertains to him and show it unto men.* Whatever pertains to him, we are to show. We must "expound in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Of those things we will attempt a brief sketch and outline, but it must be only the merest outline, and that very imperfect.

We must preach Christ in regard to the glory of the Godhead which he had with the Father before the world was. We cannot exhibit the death of the cross to which he became obedient, without considering the infinite majesty of the throne from which he descended. We must keep the connection which the apostle has given us between the glory of our Lord before he came in the flesh, and his humiliation in the flesh. You remember that "*he became*

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obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," is introduced by "*being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*"*

In the same connection is the Incarnation and Birth of our Lord. Very near are the mysteries of Bethlehem to those of Calvary. We cannot tell how Jesus bore our sins, without telling how he took our nature. To show that he *could* stand in man's place under the law, we must show that he was made very man. Hence, in the apostle's account, between the form of God from all eternity, and the obedience unto death, the connecting event is, "*he was made in the likeness of man.*" We must take care that in a just zeal for his divinity we do not impair or put in a place of comparative unimportance his humanity. The one is as essential to the Gospel as the other—the perfect man as the perfect God. Our confession glories as much in the Word "made flesh," as in the truth that the same Word "was God." In beholding and showing the great salvation, we are to consider as of equal necessity thereto "the *Man*, Christ Jesus," and that he was, and is, "Jehovah our Righteousness." In the earliest

* Phil. ii. 6–8.

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ages of Satan's attack upon the integrity of the gospel, the heresies did not more assail the essential divinity than the real humanity of Christ; knowing that if he were not perfect man, the sacrifice for man's sins were as unavailing as if he had been only man. The assaults of these present times are indicative, we think, of the same strategy. How carefully and minutely do the Scriptures exhibit our Lord as man in all that is of man, while at the same time we are made to behold his glory, "as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman," that in all time and to all eternity he might be "made unto us of God," through his death, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

In setting forth our Lord's atoning death, we must keep in full view his perfect life—that suffering life between the cradle and the cross, in which his obedience to the law, completed by the endurance of its curse for us, was all wrought out. He was the Lamb *without spot*, that he might be the sacrifice all-sufficient. It was his meetness as the purchase-price of our redemption, and at the same

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time the pattern of the mind which must be in us to make us meet to be partakers of that redemption. Christ our example of holiness is a most important part of the setting forth of Christ as our foundation of hope. There was one hour in his life for which he came into this world ;* but every hour while he was in this world, as leading to that, exhibited the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and which must be also in us. In preaching Christ crucified, let us take care that we avoid the mistake, not unfrequently made, of terminating our representation almost entirely with the crucifixion—as if the slaying of the sacrifice completed the *oblation* of the sacrifice; forgetting the office of the High Priest to enter within the veil with the blood of sprinkling, carrying the sacrifice before the mercy-seat, there to appear in the presence of God for us, and thus to "obtain eternal redemption for us." "Christ crucified" is not merely Christ on the cross, but Christ also "on the right hand of the throne of God," as having "endured the cross." That throne is called "the throne of the Lamb," and the redeemed in heaven are represented as praising "the Lamb *that was slain*." The

* John xii. 23, and xvii. 1.

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preaching of Christ *crucified* goes necessarily into all that Christ did and obtained for us after, and in consequence of, his crucifixion. The Resurrection, Ascension, and Exaltation to head-ship over all things, are great themes, vitally associated with what immediately preceded them, forming the essential connection between what was finished "once for all" when Jesus died, and what is yet to be finished "for all that come unto God by him," now that he "ever liveth." We must preach Christ in his ever living intercession—Christ the High Priest above with the incense and the blood, or we leave incomplete the view of Christ crucified. When he cried "*It is finished*," and "gave up the ghost," it was the slaying of the sacrifice; it was the suffering of the Lamb of God for us; it was the being "made a curse for us," that was then finished. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin;" but there does remain the perpetual oblation of the one finished sacrifice. Our hope stops not at the cross, but "entereth to that within the veil whither Jesus our forerunner is also, for us, entered, made a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." Thither, therefore, our ministry must also enter. Too often does

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what otherwise is well as gospel preaching come short of that mark. Our preaching follows Christ in his resurrection, and perhaps in his ascension; but do we sufficiently place before the faith of the sinner, for his prayers and his hopes to rest on, for his consolation and peace to drink of when he strives to come unto God, Jesus as now the glorious Intercessor—showing in his hands the print of the nails of the crucifixion, and bearing in his heart all the necessities of every believer? When we exhort to the running the race with patience "*looking unto Jesus*," do we sufficiently direct the eye of the hearer to Jesus, *the glorified*, in his present office and work for us? Remember, that when the apostle said, "He is able to save to the uttermost," he added, as the essential evidence, "*seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us.*"

I must not pass from this immediate neighborhood of the great sacrifice, without a few words about its nature. To speak of it as a sacrifice for sin in such general terms only as leave room for the most unreal, figurative and accommodated sense, is to come far short of our duty and of what the special tendency of error in these days demands. When we

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administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we "show the Lord's *death*." Let us take care that when we show the same in words, we do not come short of the teaching of the Sacrament. Our church interprets that teaching with studied precision, in her communion office, in reference to errors prevalent when that office was framed. She calls the sacrifice "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." She teaches us to pray for remission of sins *through faith in the blood* of Christ. We must imitate that precision in reference to errors now propagated. Besides the perfectness and sufficiency of the sacrifice, in opposition to those who would add to it, we must insist strongly and pointedly on its strictly *propitiatory* and *vicarious* nature, in opposition to those who would destroy it. Under such strong texts as "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;"* "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,"† we must teach Christ as standing literally in our stead under the condemnation of our sins; all our guilt laid upon him; he, the condemned one for us, that we might

* Gal. iii. 13. † 2 Cor. v. 21.

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be accounted the righteous in him. I see not how we can come short of such a sacrifice and yet preach Christ crucified, according to the Scriptures.*

Closely allied to our Lord's priesthood, offering the perpetual oblation of his sacrifice, is his office as the great Prophet and Teacher of his Church. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He is "made unto us of God, *wisdom*," as well as "righteousness." Christ crucified is Christ the Light as well as the Life. To his invitation, "Come unto me and I will give you rest," is joined the precept, "*learn of me.*" The great *subject* of saving learning is Christ himself, and he is the only effectual teacher of that learning. They that have "learned Christ," so as truly to know him, are declared to have "*been taught by him the truth as in Jesus.*" Whatever our advantages of human teaching, even of the truest exposition of God's inspired

* The strictly *substitutionary* character of Christ's sacrifice for our sins I consider of the most vital importance to be clearly taught, if we would satisfy the language of Scripture, or do our duty to God and man. "*He was made sin for us*," by which I understand that he stood for us under the law, by imputation of our sins, bearing all our sins, and as perfectly identified and charged with them as it was possible for one "who knew no sin" in himself to be.

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word, all is powerless spiritually to enlighten us in the knowledge of God and of Christ, till he who speaks as never man spake shall add to it the teaching of his Spirit, so that we shall learn, not merely by the Scriptures, but in them *from* and *of Him*. Christ as "*the truth*" as well as "*the way*," "the wisdom" as well as "the righteousness of God," the living "Word" as well as the ever-living Priest and Intercessor, must be showed in our ministry, if we preach Christ crucified, not merely as once on the cross, but as now in his glory.

But Christ crucified is not only "the righteousness of God" and "the wisdom of God," but "*the power of God* unto salvation." "Him hath God exalted to be a *Prince*," that he may be a Saviour, "*mighty to save*." "Unto the Son, He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Christ as King, in a glorious sovereignty over all things in heaven and earth, we must declare. It is the crowning aspect of Christ, the crucified. It is "the THRONE *of the Lamb that was slain*," before which the multitudes without number, of the saved in heaven are represented as ascribing "power and

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riches and strength and glory and honour and blessing." By his death he purchased, as Mediator, a glorious kingdom of redemption. At his ascension, he went to receive it. There now he reigns over all his people in earth and heaven, and over all else, for his people. When he shall come again, it will be in the glory of that kingdom. It was a grand introduction to that precious invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden," and that attending precept, "take my yoke and learn of me," when he said (in the verse next before), "*All things are delivered unto me of my Father.*"*

It was when he was in the humiliation and sufferings of the cross that, as the great King, he stretched forth the sceptre of his power to the malefactor at his side, and gave him repentance and remission of sins, and opened unto him the kingdom of heaven. And now that, having endured the cross, he is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, to reign forever and ever, he hath all power to make good all his promises to those who receive him and to punish with everlasting destruction those who reject him. There is no part of our *Te Deum*

* Mat. xi. 27.

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that more animates the worship of my heart than these two sentences, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!" "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." It is as King of Saints that he freely receives every sinner who seeks his salvation, writing the law of his kingdom in his heart, giving him victory over the enemies of his soul, making him triumphant in death, and finally saying unto him from his throne, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It is as Christ crucified and glorified and "King of Saints" that he utters that promise of royal authority and power, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne." *

Here then is another aspect in which we must lift up the Lord Jesus in our ministry. We must not let it be forgotten that, in all the tenderness of his invitations and promises, he speaks "as one that hath authority," not only to make them good, but to punish their rejection. The invitations of his grace are the commandments of his throne, to be answered

* Rev. iii. 21.

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for at his bar. Hence, the preaching of Christ crucified ceases not till it has exhibited "the judgment-seat of Christ." It must be noted that, when the Apostle says, "Knowing *the terror of the Lord* we persuade men," he is speaking of the terror of our Lord Jesus in his day of judgment.* That day is called "the great day of *the wrath of the Lamb*."† Why the wrath of the Lamb? Why but to keep still in view the great sacrifice of atonement; to teach that Christ on the throne of judgment is Christ that was crucified; that the chief question of that day will be, whether we have accepted or neglected the great salvation purchased by his blood; and the chief terror of that day will be the vengeance of that blood upon its rejection? While we love to speak of the blessedness of "the saints in light" as "joint heirs with Christ," we can not discharge our whole duty as preachers of Christ, unless we speak of the heritage of those who "receive his grace in vain." We have a most impressive example in St. Paul, who, knowing nothing in his ministry "but Jesus Christ and him crucified," pictured so solemnly that day when, coming "to be glorified in his

* 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. † Rev. vi. 17.

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saints and to be admired in all them that believe," the Lord Jesus "shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the gospel, and who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."*

But the preaching of Christ as the crucified extends through all the inheritance of his people forever and ever. It deserves your particular remark how carefully, in many places, the Scriptures, in speaking of the actual condition of the redeemed in heaven, and its connection with the Lord Jesus as its author, source, and substance, so speak of it as to keep not only Christ on the throne, but Christ *crucified*, Christ *the sacrifice*, in most conspicuous view. This is especially seen wherever he is spoken of in his glory as "*the Lamb*," which of course means the Lamb of *sacrifice*—the antitype of the paschal lamb and of the daily sacrifice of the law; the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter," "wounded for our transgressions. Thus the multitude which no man can number, who stand in white raiment and with palms

* 2 Thess. i. 7–10.

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of victory before the throne, are represented as "*before the Lamb*," and their adoration is in ascribing "*salvation to the Lamb*," and notice is carefully drawn to their having "washed their robes in the blood of *the Lamb*," and all that high communion and blessedness is called "*the marriage-supper of the Lamb*," and in all that dwelling-place "*the Lamb is the light thereof*," and he that "feeds them and leads them to living fountains of water" is "*the Lamb* which is in the midst of the throne," and "the river of the water of life," representing their whole felicity, proceeds "*out of the throne of the Lamb*," and the book of citizenship of the New Jerusalem, in which are written the names of all that are to inhabit there, is "the book of life of *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*."* Most evidently the intent of all this is to carry adoring thoughts of the sacrifice of the cross into our every thought of heavenly happiness, and to represent the heir of that felicity as never forgetting that great price; never seeing the Lord in his glory without seeing him as once "crucified and slain;" never ascending any height of "the heavenly places," or

* Rev. xiii. 8 and xx. 12, 14.

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drinking at any stream of their blessedness, without seeing in Christ not only "the Author and the Finisher," but all in him as "the *Lamb slain*," as he that "*liveth and was dead*," Christ the propitiation, Christ crucified. Atonement by sacrifice is written all over the heritage of the righteous. It is the chorus of every song of the saints in light. All heaven echoes with, "*Unto him that washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" So must it be in all our preaching concerning the happiness of the saved—Christ the purchaser and dispenser, but the glory of his cross never separated from the glory of his throne. When we "shall see him as he is," we shall not cease to think of him as he was.

Here a word about our representations of what is the happiness of the redeemed in heaven—what constitutes it. There is a chilling effect of many books and sermons on that subject—so much generality, so little about what the Scriptures place so above all; so much made of the subordinate and accessory features, the pastures and the flowers of the heavenly land, and so little of the Sun that gives them all their beauty and life; as if you should speak of the garden of Eden, and make

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more of what God planted than of the presence and communion of God therein—not remembering what Paradise in all its beauty became to man when that communion was withdrawn. Christ is carefully to be preached, as being, himself, in his glory and communion, the heaven of his people; as well as, in his humiliation and sacrifice, its purchase-price. How striking is the testimony of the Scriptures to this point. Has Jesus gone away to prepare a place for us in his Father's house? His promise is, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Does he pray his Father in behalf of the happiness of his people, the prayer is, "that they may be with me where I am and behold my glory." While it doth not appear what we shall be "as sons of God" and "joint heirs with Christ," does St. John speak of one thing that we do know. It is that "we shall be like and see him as he is." Does Jesus promise to them that overcome, that they "shall eat of the hidden manna"? That manna is himself. "I am that bread of life." Is heaven described as a glorious city of habitation? "The Lamb is the temple" and "the light thereof." Hath it a river of water of

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life, and on either side the tree of life? All that river comes forth from "the throne of the Lamb." Christ is "the Finisher of our faith" in this, that he is, in himself, the consummation of our hope; his presence, his communion, his everlasting love being the prize of our high calling, and the goal of our race. We come to him now, and he is our peace. We go to be with him forever, and he is our glory. Ask the way to heaven; we say, *Christ.* Ask where heaven is; we say, *where Christ is.* Ask what heaven is; we answer, *what Christ is.* Thus preach we Christ crucified, whenever we speak according to the Scriptures of what constitutes the life eternal of the sinner "redeemed by the blood of the Lamb."

But we must take good heed, that we do not so speak of our Lord in his heavenly power and glory as not to give due place to his ever present personal ministry, in and to, his Church on earth. The impression is too prevalent that here in our duties and wants and prayers we have only a Saviour and helper afar off.

The precious assurance of the Scriptures is, that we have a Saviour so near to every one of us, that

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he is "a very present help"—so present that nothing can separate us from him; that nothing but unbelief ever intervenes between our wants and his fullness, neither space nor time, nor unworthiness nor weakness—so present that he is ever at the door,—waiting to be received, or beneath our weakness ready to be leaned on. No presence is so "*very* present" as that of Christ, in the power of his Spirit to every heart that seeks him—enlightening, guiding, comforting, upholding, drawing sinners to himself, making himself known to them, giving efficacy to means of grace; whatever the instruments, He the only power. "I am the good shepherd." All is comprehended in that declaration. As the good shepherd, he is the *present* shepherd, so present to each of the flock that he "calleth every one by name and leadeth him out." Oh, what a help and comfort it is when we get a full comprehension and an abiding impression of *that presence*. How it strengthens the Minister of the Gospel! How it lifts up the heart of the Christian!

In this connection, the faithful preaching of Christ will keep in great prominence, that aspect of himself which he taught with such emphasis, when he

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spake of himself as "*the living bread—the bread of God*" of whom the manna in the wilderness was the type and the bread of our Eucharist is the Sacrament; Christ the present daily life of his people—they abiding in him by faith, he in them by his Spirit; all their life as children of God now—all their hopes of life forever, depending on that habitual communion—the vine and the branches. The more we ourselves enjoy of that *abiding*, the better shall we know how to teach it. Nowhere does mere book-knowledge of what is given us to preach assist us less.

When we speak of Christ as "*the life*," fulfilling the type of the manna, let us take care that we set in clear view, not only our dependence, but His *freeness*. It was one prominent aspect of that "spiritual meat" of which "all our fathers" of the Church in the wilderness ate, that all classes and conditions of people partook of it alike, and all with equal and perfect freeness. It lay all around the camp, as accessible to one as another. Moses, nor Aaron, nor any priest or ruler had any privilege at that table which the humblest Israelite had not. The priesthood had no office of intervention between

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the hungry and that bread. *Whosoever will, let him take and eat*, was the proclamation. Let us take good heed that what we cannot deny in the type be not narrowed or concealed in the antitype. Our text is, "*Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*" * And I do not know a text that contains more of the essence of the preaching of Christ in the richness and freeness of his salvation. Oh, let us take care that our ministry shall keep full in the sight of men that open way, that free access, that directness of coming, not to some mere symbolical representation, but to the *very present* Christ, in all his tenderness of love and power to save. Ordinances, ministers, are sadly out of place, no matter how divinely appointed for certain uses, when instead of mere helps in coming to Christ, they are made, in any sense, conditions or terms of approach, so that the sinner gets to Christ only or, in any degree, by them. The light of the sun is not more free to every man that cometh into the world, than is the salvation of Jesus to every believing sinner. It is our business to be continually showing that precious truth; coming by faith,

* John vi. 37.

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all the condition;—Christ, the full and perfect salvation of all that come.

But in the range of gospel truth, there are subjects of instruction, which though not directly concerning his person and office, are so connected with all right appreciation of his saving grace that we cannot keep them out of view, without affecting most injuriously our whole ministry. Be it remembered that while the cross with its immediate neighborhood is the metropolis of Christianity—all the region round about is Holy Land, more or less holy according to the nearness to that "city of our God;" "a land of milk and honey," "of brooks and fountains of water," intersected in all directions with highways by which pilgrims to Zion approach the desire of their hearts. It is the office of the gospel preacher to map out that land; to trace those converging roads—to set up the way-marks to the city of Refuge. Christ is not fully preached when any truth which teaches the sinner's need of such a Saviour—illustrating his preciousness by showing our ruin and beggary through sin dwelling in us and bringing condemnation upon us, is kept in obscurity. The wisdom of "the scribe, instructed

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unto the kingdom of God, to bring out of his treasure things new and old," is found in his omitting nothing connected with the Gospel, however remote from the great central truths and duties; and in his giving to each its portion in due season, as well as its place in due relation.

For example: Christ is "our *righteousness*" unto justification to every one that believeth, so that in him there is no condemnation.* But we shall preach him in vain, in that light, unless we show the sinner's absolute need of such righteousness. We must seek, under the power of the Holy Ghost, so to convince him of sin that he shall see himself to be under the condemnation of God's law, without excuse and without hope, till he flees to that refuge. Blessed is he whose ministry the Spirit employs to teach that lesson of ruin and beggary. It is the threshold of the way of life. The text-book in that teaching is the law—God's will, however, and wherever expressed. Preached in a spiritual application to the secrets of the heart, not only as the rule of obedience but as the condition of peace with God to every one that is not in Christ Jesus, and on the

* Romans viii. 1.

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perfect keeping of which all his hope depends; preached in view of the salvation of Jesus as only increasing the condemnation so long as it is salvation neglected; it is the instrument of the Holy Ghost to strip the sinner of self-reliance and self-justification, to humble him before God under a a sense of guilt and ruin,—and as a "schoolmaster to lead him to Christ that he may be justified by faith." He that would preach a full justification in Christ, without works, must preach entire condemnation under the law, by works. By the law is the knowledge of sin and hence the knowledge in part of Christ. Clear, unequivocal statements of the divine law; the full exhibition of the text, "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them*" (that continueth not in all things from first to last of life), thus carrying the sword of the Spirit into the discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart, is the special basis of and preparation for all saving knowledge of Christ. The way of the Lord is prepared by that fore-runner. How many more consciences would cry out for relief under the load of sin; how much oftener would the careless

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heart be awakened to seek mercy through Christ, were there only a more searching comparison of all that is in man with all the holiness of the will of God.

Again: Christ is "made unto us *sanctification.*"* But how can we do justice to so cardinal a truth of God's grace, unless we do ample justice to that other great truth of man's nature out of which arises all the need of a sanctifier—the entire "corruption the nature of every man that is naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam?"† The beginning of sanctification is to be born again of the Holy Ghost. According to men's views of the extent to which by nature they are corrupt and alienated from God, will be their views of the spiritual nature, necessity and extent of that great change. Hence to preach Christ in sanctification, we must preach man in his natural corruption. The "*carnal mind*" is "*enmity against God* and is *not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.*"‡ Let us faithfully expound those words of St. Paul. We need no stronger declaration as the basis of the whole superstructure of the need of an entire inward regen-

* 1 Cor. i. 30. † Article IX. ‡ Rom. viii. 7

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eration, making the sinner a new creature in Christ Jesus—new in heart, new in life and hope. That this preaching of the necessity of such new creature is eminently the preaching of Christ, we have a striking testimony in these words of the Epistle of the Ephesians (chap. iv. 20–24), "Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be ye have heard him and been taught by him the truth as in Jesus; that ye put off—the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

But how shall we speak of so great spiritual transformation without speaking with equal stress of Him who produces it? What sanctification is to salvation, such is the right teaching of the power and office of the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, the Spirit of Christ, and all comprehending gift of God. What is there in the Christian life, from first to last, that is not the work of the Holy Ghost? Is the sinner convinced of sin, Jesus sent the Spirit to do that work. Is he quickened from spiritual death? "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth.*" Is he born again?

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He is "*born of the Spirit.*" Is he spiritually minded? It is because he "*minds the things of the Spirit.* Is he a "follower of God," as a dear child? It is because he is "*led by the Spirit of God.*" Hath he an internal evidence of that sonship? It is because *the Spirit beareth witness with his spirit.* Is the love of God "shed abroad in our hearts?" It is "by *the Holy Ghost given unto us.*" Do we learn how to pray as we ought? It is because "*the Spirit helpeth our infirmities.*" Are we comforted with the consolation of Christ? The Spirit is "*the Comforter.*" Are we strengthened in our duty? It is "by *the Spirit in the inner man.*" Do we grow in the knowledge of Christ? Jesus said of the Holy Ghost: "*He shall take of mine and show it unto you.*" And beside the spiritual resurrection and sanctification, will these vile bodies also rise; will they also be sanctified and made glorious according to the glory of our risen Lord? It is written that "He shall quicken your mortal bodies by *His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"*

Rightly to honor the Holy Ghost as He is thus revealed in His own inspired word, how important

* Rom. viii. 11.

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to the faithfulness, the fruitfulness of our ministry. We may so come short of it—we may so contradict it, that while bearing a very reputable character before men, we may all the while be "grieving the Holy Ghost," yea, even "resisting the Holy Ghost." How much barrenness in the work of the ministry, in making not church-members, but spiritually enlightened and spiritually-minded followers of Christ, may be ascribed to deficiency—negativeness at least, in this great department of our teaching! In no part of his work does a minister more need to be taught of God or to sit humbly at the feet of Jesus to learn of him; nowhere does a decline of spirituality of mind so soon show itself as here. In no part of our work do we depend more upon a decided, habitual, personal experience in our own souls of God's gracious operation. It is here that great departures from the truth which go on to carry away eventually whole communities of professing Christians into manifold and essential errors, almost always secretly or overtly begin; as it is the final construction of a system from which the personal office of the Holy Ghost is virtually if not professedly excluded, in which they culminate. The Scriptural

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description of a spiritual mind is, that it "minds the things of the Spirit." It is equally the test of a spiritual and evangelical ministry. That which specially tries our spiritual discernment and skill in rightly dividing the word of truth is the right adjustment of means of grace in their relation to the power of grace, of instruments of blessing to the hand that employs them and that gives them all their efficacy. The Spirit hath His instruments. His grace hath its means. His great instrument in our sanctification, is His own revealed Truth, by which he testifies of and glorifies the Lord Jesus in our eyes. Sacraments are that same essential truth, taught under other signs, and sealed with a special impressiveness. The preaching of that same truth by an ordained Ministry, is the great instrumentality of the Spirit. The point of caution is, while giving all due place to the instrument that we keep it exclusively in the place of a mere instrument—of no avail in itself; that we treat it as we treat the glass by which we seek to see some distant star—not as an object to be looked at—but only as a help to look immeasurably beyond and above it; that as the glass is nothing without the light, so the means of grace are nothing

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without "the Spirit of grace;" that all the power is of the Holy Ghost, and *that* power not deposited in the means, as we put bread into the hand of a distributor, so that whosoever receives the latter receives the bread; that power never divorced from the personal ministry of the Spirit, but applied directly by Himself to each heart that receives His grace; He "dividing to every man severally as He will." To speak of an ordinance, a sacrament, any means of grace, even the Holy Scriptures of truth, as if they were in any sense the *power* unto salvation, or as if they contained, whatever its original source, the grace by which we live unto God, thus leading men to look to them, instead of only, by their help, to Christ and His Spirit, is to "do despite to the Spirit of grace."

The whole truth in this connection is found where the Apostle says: "Who is Paul and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, *even as the Lord gave to every man.*"* Instead of Paul and Apollos, read any ordinance or means of grace. What are they but ministrations of man by help of which ye believe, even as the Lord giveth to every man.

* 1 Cor. iii. 5.

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There is a text which the full and explicit preaching of Christ will be always directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, illustrating. It is those verses in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Salvation all of grace only; in its origin in the love of God; in its purchase by the blood of Christ; in the first quickening of the sinner from the death of sin; in all the renewal of his nature; in his acceptance through Christ, to the peace of God; in his whole ability to live as a child of God; and in his final admission to the glory of God—*all of grace only*—wonderful grace;—but *through faith alone*—and that faith itself a gift of grace; our works in every degree and aspect wholly excluded from the work of saving us, though necessarily included *as fruits* of the grace that does save us—we being created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works and not in any degree *by* good works—first God's workmanship making us new creatures, then our working as so created "unto good works

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which God hath ordained that we should walk in them." We preach such works, *first*, as absolutely excluded from having any part in procuring our Justification before God; *secondly*, as essential fruits and evidences of our having obtained such Justification. We preach the office of Faith as so vital that only by it are we united to Christ, as living stones built upon the living head of the corner; and the necessity of good works as so absolute, that only in them can we walk as God hath ordained and have evidence that we are true believers in Jesus; and at the same time both faith and works deriving all being from the Spirit of God and all value and efficacy to salvation from the Righteousness of Christ.

Here let me add some few miscellaneous observations. We are bound to instruct the believer in all the privileges and consolations that are in Christ that his joy may be full. But we must lay equal stress on all his obligations, that Christ may be glorified. Out of the same wounds of the cross come privilege and duty, promise and commandment, the consolation of faith and the duty of obedience; and the same preaching that leads to the one must alike insist on the other, and on both as necessary

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to our having that rest which Jesus promises. It is a great matter so to preach the precepts of Christ as to lead men to embrace his promises; and so the promises as to draw the disobedient to the love of his precepts. In all our work we have two great sources of persuasion, according to the example of St. Paul, namely, "We beseech you by *the mercies* of God," and again, "Knowing *the terror of the Lord*, we persuade men;" the love of God in Christ as a Saviour, and the wrath of God in Christ as Judge of quick and dead; a cloud of light and a cloud of darkness, each proceeding from the cross as accepted or rejected. We must do all in tenderness, but all in faithfulness. The whole counsel of God embraces the fearful penalty of unpardoned sin as well as the glorious inheritance of the reconciled in Christ. The faithful preacher of Christ keeps back none of it. While he delights in the loving aspects of his grace, he is not ashamed of the severities of his justice. He does not indeed denounce or judge. It is not for him to command or condemn. His work is always to entreat and persuade; tenderly, lovingly, patiently, in the mind of Christ. But persuasion has the alarming truths to use as well as the encour-

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aging. That, "*God is a consuming fire*," out of Christ, is as much an argument of persuasion and tenderness, as that in Christ, "God is Love." We read of "*the goodness and severity of God.*"* We must exhibit both. They interpret and enforce one another. But how to balance aright judgment and mercy, invitation and warning, precepts of obedience, and promises of consolation, the tender "*Come unto me and I will give you rest*," with the stern "*Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*," the darkness and the light—the loving voice from the Mercy-seat and the dreadful sentence from the Judgment-seat—all under the duty of teaching and preaching Jesus Christ, is not learned from books only, is not given by specific rule, comes chiefly out of the state of the heart, under the general light of the Scriptures, and by a careful endeavor to learn of, and be like, him of whom it is beautifully written that he hath "the tongue of the learned to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."†

From all that has now been said, it appears how mistaken is the idea that by confining our preach-

* Rom. xi. 22. † Isaiah l. 4.

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ing to Christ and him crucified we have a very narrow range of truth to expatiate in. In reality, we have the whole vast range of natural and revealed religion. A wider field no preacher can find who does not seek it beyond the confines of religious truth. The difference between the man who confines himself to the preaching of Christ and him who does not, need not be that the latter embraces any portion of divine truth—of doctrine or duty, of history or prophecy or precept which enters not into the range of the former. It may be wholly a difference in the mode of presenting precisely the same truth—a difference in the bearings; in the relations assigned to every part; in the cardinal points to which all is adjusted; in the *polarity*, so to speak, which governs such manifestation of truth as deserves the name and praise of the preaching of Christ. You may take truth from the immediate neighborhood of the cross, or from the farthest boundaries of the domain of Christianity, and when its just relation to Christ and his redemption is exhibited Christ is preached. Thus there is no reason why, in the most faithful ministry, there may not be abundant variety of topic and of instruction. The

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sermon may be always shining in the light of our glorious Lord, while receiving it either by direct looking unto him, or indirectly from secondary objects which, as satellites of the sun, revolve around him and shine in his glory. The sermon, in all its spirit and tendency, may say, "*Behold the Lamb of God*," and yet the view may be as changing as the positions from which it is taken, the circumstances which influence it, the lights and shadows of the several conditions and necessities of the minds before which it is placed. In general we may say that, as no subject is legitimate in the preaching of a minister of Christ that does not admit of being presented in some important relation to Christ; so no sermon is evangelical that does not truly exhibit such relation, giving him the same position to the whole discourse that he holds in the Scriptures to the whole body of truth therein. As some subjects have a much nearer and more vital relation to him than others, they will be much the most frequent and engrossing in the preaching of a faithful Christian minister. The great truths, the great facts, the great duties and privileges and interests and consolations which proceed the most directly from the

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person and office—the death and intercession of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit—as well as those which lead the most immediately thereto, will be so habitually the subjects of his preaching, that the more remote and indirect will be only occasional, exeeptions to the standing rule and habit. And which of these classes of subjects his mind and heart most delight in, and which draw forth the deepest earnestness and the strongest emotions of his soul, will not be doubtful.

We have now exhibited as much of our great and wide subject as we could with any propriety occupy your time with. You will, of course, understand that we have not attempted to embrace the whole field. What has been attempted, we are deeply conscious is most imperfect and inadequate. Still, we have not withheld our best endeavors, where even St. Paul exclaimed, "*Who is sufficient for these things!*" We conclude with a brief view of the state of mind and spirit which qualifies a minister to be a faithful preacher of Christ.

1. *A spirit of Faith.* I mean Faith not merely in such of its exercises as make the minister a living Christian, and a growing, vigorous Christian;

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but in that special exercise which enables him to go on patiently, persistently, hopefully, immovably, preaching the Gospel as we have seen the Apostles preached it, in like simplicity and spirituality—with as little of the devices and mixtures and dilutions and subterfuges of man's wisdom, no matter what the obstacles or what the apparent fruitlessness—believing it is God's own way, to which alone His blessing is promised and which He *will* bless as his own "wisdom and power unto salvation." It was precisely with such meaning that St. Paul, just after he had pronounced, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"—and just after he had adverted to the fact that such preaching failed to open the eyes of many that heard saying "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world had blinded the minds of them which believe not."* It was in full view of all whom their preaching did not succeed in convincing, but only made the more hardened and hopeless, that he said, "*We believe and therefore speak*," † meaning not only that they believed what they spoke, but that they believed it was just what God commanded

* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. † v. 13.

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them to speak. And no rejection of it by man could shake that confidence or lead them to speak any thing else or in any other way. Well they knew what a "stumbling-block to the Jew," and what utter "foolishness to the Greek," was their testimony concerning Christ crucified; but not a word would they change—"*We believe and therefore speak.*" It was this lesson of faith that Paul gave to Timothy. He warned him of a time of apostacy approaching—"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine—and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned unto fables."* How then was Timothy to do in such times? What "*sound doctrine*," meant in the mind of St. Paul, we well know — all that way of justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed and of sanctification by the Spirit of God imparted to the believer; that whole way of life of which the *vicarious* propitiation by the sacrifice of Christ was the central power and life. It was all that doctrine which men would not endure. And what was Timothy to do? Conclude that he, and other preachers of Christ, had taken the wrong method because thus unsuccessful? that

* 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

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they must find out some other sort of preaching because that was so rejected? Since men would not endure sound doctrine, must he try to get them into the church, or if in the church already, to make them satisfied to stay there, by giving them unsound doctrine? If the truth caused them to turn away from it, must *he* turn away from it also and give them something else to correct the evil? What said the faith of an Apostle?—No compromise—no accommodation—only so much more earnestly and continually that same rejected doctrine. Hear Paul's remedy! "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom—preach the *word* (the same offensive word), be instant in season, out of season—reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine."* The more the truth is turned away from, so much the more proclaim it. God will see to the issue. "So we preach, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth the heart." Such is the faith of which we are speaking, as of such importance in our ministry.

The *times* which St. Paul predicted, and which

* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

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began before Timothy had ended his labors, are yet in being. We all know how they have been exhibited since the beginning of this century; in this country, under the name of Unitarianism, and on the continent of Europe, under that of Rationalism. And we have heard with amazement and grief how they have appeared of late in the venerable Church of England, among some of her clergy, in her high places of college and pulpit teaching, and how even a Bishop takes the lead; and how while it is manifest that he cannot endure the sound doctrine of the Scriptures, and therefore labors to destroy their authority, he dares, with a dishonesty most astonishing, and an effrontery unexampled, to persist in holding the office of a Bishop in the Church of Christ against the remonstrance of all his peers, and to the great disgust of right-minded people. The case is singular. There were Bishops of the Romish Church who under the reign of infidelity in France during the Revolution, renounced the faith; but they renounced also their office in the Church. We have a more primitive example. Judas Iscariot, when he had betrayed his Lord, having been "guide to them that took Jesus," had too much conscience left to

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continue in his "apostleship." "His Bishopric" another took.

But perhaps we have adverted with more point to the case of this English Bishop than his importance deserved. We were speaking of the new aspect of affairs among certain of the Church of England. True, the most prominent manifestation is in attacks on the Inspiration of the Scriptures. But let not any suppose the ultimate or inspiring object to be there. The citadel of truth and life can not be reached till that outwork is reduced. *Atonement* is the final object. Atonement for sin by the precious blood of Christ, with all the precious doctrines of salvation which reside therein, as branches in the vine, and which are dead and only fit to be cast away as rubbish the moment such atonement is taken away; That is the doctrine they cannot endure. That is the truth from which they turn away, but which they know is safe so long as the Scriptures are the final Rule of Faith. Meanwhile they would counsel us to give up the old way of preaching Christ, as no doubt the best way for the old times, but unfit for these times when through mature growth of man's wisdom such doctrine is counted, just

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indeed as it was by similar minds in the old times, "*foolishness.*" They would have us lay aside creeds and confessions, in order that they who cannot endure the doctrine of Apostles and Prophets may be accounted Christians no less than those who believe and love it. They would make the Church so broad that any varieties or oppositions of belief may be embraced in its communion and even in its ministry, thus strangely sacrificing gospel-truth to church-comprehensiveness.

Now suppose such evil times should visit us in our church—what must we do? I ask it to illustrate what I mean by the faith of which I am speaking. Must we preach the word, as Paul understood it, any the less? Shall we suppose that to preach Christ crucified is not as much "the wisdom and power of God," as when apostles set us the example? Or shall we believe as they believed, and therefore continue to speak as they spoke, even though the whole earth should be covered with a flood of apostacy, and men everywhere should be turned unto fables? What says a true faith in God? No change, but in more earnestness with the unchanged. "Preach the word"—the same word—"Instant in

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season, out of season," "with all long suffering and doctrine." Let patience have her perfect work. Be not faithless—but believing—God's hand is not shortened that it cannot save by that same word now as in the ancient times.

These observations are not applicable only to circumstances which may hereafter exist among us. Always, everywhere in our ministry we find those calling themselves Christians, or at least numbered in Christian congregations, to whom what St. Paul meant by "sound doctrine" is an aversion. They do not like to hear, they turn away from hearing so much about atonement and justification, and a new heart, and faith, and all the inward work of the Holy Ghost. A less spiritual religion would be far more to their taste—and they think if we would preach much less about the great distinctive features of the Gospel and more about mere moral duties—that is, less religion and more of something else, many ears, now turned away, would hear. Very likely. And under the influence of such views, the testimony of the pulpit is sometimes grievously deformed. The minister seeks to commend himself more to the people's preferences than their consciences; and hence, of

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course, not by manifestation of the truth in its simplicity, directness, spirituality and completeness. He enlarges the list of communicants by reducing the spiritual qualifications for the communion. He makes the narrow gate wider; invites a condition of mind which the Lord invites not. The middle wall of partition between the church and the world is broken down, the more to please the world, the more to enlarge the church. Such compliances we have no right to make. They spring out of unbelief. They poison the life of the church. If men will not endure sound doctrine *we* cannot help it, we have no unsound to give. If the ground will not receive the good seed given us to sow, we cannot mend the matter by sowing bad seed. To the end of the world, come what may, that seed and that only must we sow. "God (that giveth the seed) giveth the increase," and *will* give it. Our strength is *to believe.*

But to preach Christ is not only "a work of faith," it is "a labor of love." I will not say that no man can do it in a certain sense, that is, with doctrinal correctness, without the love of Christ in his heart; for St. Paul speaks of some in his day who preached Christ, "even of envy and strife, not sincerely,"

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from selfish and evil motives. I will not prolong this discourse in enlarging on the elementary truth that without a personal experience of the preciousness of Christ to our own souls, by each one's individual participation in the hope that rests on his justifying righteousness, and is witnessed by the sanctifying power of His Spirit dwelling in us, we cannot preach Christ, according to his will, in his mind, in the tenderness and earnestness and patience and godly wisdom which alone become our office, however correct our teaching in a mere doctrinal aspect. What I wish, in these concluding words to insist on is, the importance of a very earnest, tender and overcoming love, to give spirituality to our theology, and the mind of Christ to our teachings concerning him. Two preachers, alike in accurate and full statement of all that is revealed concerning our blessed Lord and his salvation, may be very different in the spiritual power of their ministry, and the difference will not depend so much on the superiority of talent or of eloquence, or even of diligence in one over the other, as on their comparison in point of love. He will preach best who loves most. His preaching will go most to the heart, and will be attended with most

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of "the demonstration of the Spirit," who, in all he says and does, is most constrained by the love of Christ, dictating, animating, sanctifying, with the tenderness and patient earnestness of his Masters' mind, his whole discourse. Oh, brethren, that we were more earnest to grow in this grace! What ought we to value in personal attainment, compared with it? If your ministry fail in spiritual efficacy, inquire into the cause by searching the state of your hearts in regard to the love of Christ therein, to what extent the aim, the zeal, the topics, the temper of your work, and the whole character of your personal example are under the dominion of that love.

But I have already occupied too much of your time, and yet I feel that I have come very far short of the height and breadth of what I have sought to exhibit. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." Blessed be God, that in our weakness we have His power to lean on. I humbly pray that power of God to bless to you, dear brethren, what in so much weakness and imperfectness and unworthiness I have now addressed to you. Nothing in this world could I rejoice in so much as to be instrumental,

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under God's grace, in promoting the spiritual excellency and efficacy of your work and your personal growth in the faith and love of Christ. The time is at hand when nothing else will seem of the smallest value. I commend you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up and make you good stewards of the unsearchable riches of Christ. "The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

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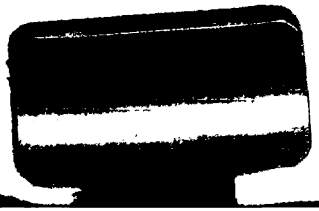

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